

VZCZCXYZ0001  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNT #0167/01 0380553  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 070553Z FEB 08  
FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9191  
INFO RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 3720  
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 9930  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1231  
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 4334  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0192  
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0085  
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0212  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 3921  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 2189  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0276  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0931  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0866  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0363  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1758  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0989  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0128  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2315  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 000167

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2018  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UZ](#)  
SUBJECT: GOU AMNESTIES MORE POLITICAL PRISONERS

REF: A. TASHKENT 126  
[1](#)B. TASHKENT 155  
[1](#)C. TASHKENT 152

Classified By: POLOFF R. FITZMAURICE FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a press release on February 5, Human Rights Watch (HRW) announced that the Uzbek government on February 4 and 5 had amnestied two additional political prisoners, Dilmurod Muhitdinov and Bahodir Mukhtarov, though Ezgulik Chairperson Vasila Inoyatova has been unable to confirm that Muhitdinov has been released from prison yet. Also on February 5, the French Embassy received a diplomatic note from the GOU announcing amnesty for three additional human rights activists: Bobomurod Mavlanov, Ulugbek Kattabekov, and Gulbahor Turayeva. The diplomatic note was received shortly before a meeting of the EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Committee, which was held in Tashkent the same day. In less positive news, the GOU's diplomatic note indicated that human rights activist Elena Uralayeva and journalist Jamshid Karimov, who is currently being forcibly detained at a psychiatric hospital in Samarkand province, could not be amnestied because they have never been charged with a crime. In addition, Inoyatova was unable to visit imprisoned Sunshine Coalition leader in prison on February 5, and the brother of imprisoned human rights activist Mutabar Tojiboyeva reported that his sister has been placed back into solitary confinement. Despite these setbacks, though, the release of an increasingly significant number of political prisoners indicates that the recent engagement of the EU and the United States in dialogue with the GOU is paying dividends. End summary.

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH ANNOUNCES TWO MORE ACTIVISTS FREED

-----

¶2. (U) In a press release on February 5, Human Rights Watch (HRW) announced that the Uzbek government on February 4 and 5 had amnestied and released two additional political prisoners, Dilmurod Muhitdinov and Bahodir Mukhtarov. Muhitdinov is an Andijon-based member of the human rights group Ezgulik. He was sentenced in January 2006 to five years' imprisonment on politically-motivated charges of anti-constitutional activity after being accused of distributing a Birlik opposition party statement condemning the 2005 Andijon events. Mukhtarov, who was sentenced to one year's imprisonment in June 2007, is the eldest son of Mamatkul Mukhtarov, the head of the Samarkand branch of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan. In the press release, HRW also calls on the EU to maintain sanctions against Uzbekistan until the GOU releases all political prisoners (Note: In October, the EU decided to temporarily suspend a visa ban against selected Uzbek officials suspected of involvement in the 2005 Andijon events. The EU's next decision on whether to keep the visa ban from automatically resuming will be in April. End note.)

¶3. (C) On January 25, Ezgulik Chairman Vasila Inoyatova reported being told by prison officials that Muhitdinov would be amnestied and released (ref A). However, as of February 6, she still could not confirm that Muhitdinov has been released, and his family has yet to be contacted by him. Inoyatova was unsure from where HRW received its information that Muhitdinov had been released, though she noted that an unconfirmed rumor had spread about his release a few days ago.  
DIPLOMATIC NOTE ANNOUNCES AMNESTY FOR SIX INDIVIDUALS...

¶4. (C) On February 6, French DCM Christophe Le Rigoleur reported to poloff that his Embassy received a diplomatic note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on February 5 announcing amnesty for six human rights defenders. The list included Bobomurod Mavlanov, Ulugbek Kattabekov, and Gulbahor Turayeva, whose amnesties had not been previously announced. The other three individuals on the list were Saidjahon Zaybiddinov, Umida Niyazova, and Ikhtiyor Hamroev, whose amnesties were recently announced by the GOU (refs B and C).

¶5. (U) Bobomurod Mavlanov is a Samarkand-based member of both the Independent Human Rights Organization of Uzbekistan and the opposition Erk political party. In November 2005, he was sentenced to five and a half years' imprisonment on politically-motivated charges of bribe-taking. Ulugbek Kattabekov is a Jizzakh-based human rights activist and chair of the Zamin district branch of the human rights group Ezgulik. In June 2005, Kattabekov was sentenced to three and a half years' imprisonment on politically-motivated charges of extortion. Gulbahor Turayeva is an Andijon-based forensic pathologist and human rights defender. In April 2007, Turayeva was sentenced to six years' imprisonment on politically-motivated charges of anti-constitutional activities. In June 2007, an appeals court commuted her six year prison term to a six year suspended sentence and three years' probation.

...BUT NO AMNESTY FOR ELENA URLAYEVA OR JAMSHID KARIMOV

¶6. (C) According to Le Rigoleur, the diplomatic note also referred to the cases of human rights activist Elena Uralyeva and journalist Jamshid Karimov, indicating that the two could not be amnestied as they had not been charged with crimes. Karimov, the nephew of President Karimov, was forcibly committed to the Samarkand Psychiatric Hospital in September 2006, despite doctors' admission that he was stable and in good health. In November 2006, a Tashkent court renewed a previous decision from 2005 ordering Uralyeva to undergo outpatient psychiatric treatment. As a result, Uralyeva is obligated to meet once a month with a doctor at a psychiatric clinic and is listed in the local police registry as mentally ill. Le Rigoleur confirmed that Uralyeva and Karimov were on the list of 22 individuals that the EU had submitted to the

GOU for amnesty consideration.

DIVERGENT VIEWS OF EU-UZBEKISTAN COOPERATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING IN TASHKENT

-----

¶7. (C) Le Rigoleur said that the French Embassy received the diplomatic note on the morning of February 5, shortly before the EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Committee meeting began that day. He believed that the note's timing was no coincidence, and interpreted it as a positive sign that the GOU wanted the meeting that day to be a success and was open to further dialogue. He did not go into details about the meeting itself, but he described the discussions as "open" and "positive." Le Rigoleur said that human rights issues were not raised during the meeting itself, but were discussed informally during lunch.

¶8. (C) On February 5, poloff also discussed the GOU's diplomatic note and the EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Committee meeting with British Third Secretary Ben Greenwood, who was decidedly less upbeat. Greenwood was dismissive of the significance of the meeting, noting that it was "staid and heavily scripted." He confirmed that discussions of human rights were largely avoided, but said that there was some discussion of the GOU's recent abolishment of the death penalty and adoption of the so-called "habeas corpus" law transferring the right to issue arrest warrants from prosecutors to the judiciary. Greenwood added that the EU was being represented at the meeting by members of the EU Commission and the Slovenian Foreign Ministry (Note: Slovenia currently holds the EU presidency. End note.) The French and German Ambassadors gave a more upbeat impression of the encounter to the Ambassador on the evening of February 5, with details to follow.

HOW MANY POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE ON THE EU LIST?

-----

¶9. (C) Le Rigoleur said that the diplomatic note was a formal response to a list of 28 political prisoners the EU submitted to the GOU in May 2007. Le Rigoleur admitted that there was some confusion over the total number of names on the list, but said that his Embassy believed the number to be 28. Greenwood, however, insisted that the list had only 22 names, and offered to share it with poloff later this week. Greenwood noted that the six activists whose amnesty was announced in the February 5 diplomatic note were all included on the EU list. In addition, he said that other individuals on the list have already been released. He also confirmed that some individuals on the list remain imprisoned.

¶10. (C) On January 30, German poloff Uwe Brandt provided poloff with an undated response the EU received from the GOU after submitting its list of political prisoners in May 2007. The GOU's response addressed the cases of 13 of the political prisoners, and did so by simply reiterating the charges upon which each of them had been convicted. Of the 13 cases addressed by the GOU, four individuals have since been amnestied (Saidjahon Zaybiddinov, Umida Niyazova, and Ikhtiyor Hamroev in 2008, and Yadigar Turlibekov in 2007) and seven remain imprisoned (Mutabar Tojiboyeva, Dilmurod Mukhiddinov, Nasim Isakov, Azamjon Farmonov, Alisher Karomatov, Khabibullo Okpulatov, and Sattor Irzaev). The remaining two persons addressed by the GOU were Elena Urdayeva and Nodira Khidoyatova, who was given a three year suspended sentence on politically-motivated charges of tax evasion and illegal commodities trading in March 2006.

EZGULIK LEADER FAILS TO MEET WITH SANJAR UMAROV

-----

¶11. (C) On February 6, Ezgulik Chairman Vasila Inoyatova reported being unable to visit imprisoned opposition Sunshine Coalition leader Sanjar Umarov on February 5. Inoyatova traveled to the prison where Umarov is being held in Navoi province, but when she arrived, she was told by prison authorities that Umarov refused to meet with her. Inoyatova

demanding to hear this from Umarov in person, but she was turned away by prison authorities. Since Umarov was imprisoned in March 2006 on politically-motivated charges of tax evasion and illegal commodities trading, family members reportedly have had only two opportunities to visit him in prison.

#### MUTABAR TOJIBOYEVA PLACED BACK INTO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

-----

¶12. (C) On February 6, Rasul Tojiboyev, the brother of imprisoned human rights activist Mutabar Tojiboyeva, reported that his sister has been placed back into solitary confinement at the Tashkent Women's Colony for allegedly violating internal prison regulations. He is scheduled to visit his sister again in prison on February 8 (Comment: Tojiboyeva is among a group of political prisoners whose amnesty was rumored to be forthcoming. The news that she has been placed back into solitary confinement suggests that she may not be amnestied after all. In previous years, prison authorities contrived for political prisoners to break internal prison rules as a means of denying them amnesty.)

#### COMMENT

-----

¶13. (C) In its February 5 press release, Human Rights Watch (HRW) called for the EU to reinstate sanctions against Uzbekistan unless the GOU fulfills all of the EU's conditions, including releasing all political prisoners. We do not agree with HRW that reinstating sanctions against Uzbekistan will have the desired effect. Instead, the GOU could react by breaking off contact with the Embassy again and bringing to a halt the release of political prisoners. Moreover, activists on the ground here - including former HRW staffer Umida Niyazova herself - have told us explicitly that they believe greater engagement by the international community is far more likely to produce positive results than sanctions and isolation. We agree that continued dialogue with the GOU on issues of mutual concern, including human rights, stands a much better chance of actually improving the human rights situation on the ground. Already, despite some setbacks, the recent engagement of the EU and the United States with the GOU has paid some dividends in regards to human rights, including the release of an increasingly significant number of political prisoners.

NORLAND